Issuing of Medical visa to patients

689. SHRIMATI SHOBHANABHARTIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that last year two lac Medical tourists visited India and it is expected to increase by 50 per cent during the current year;

(b) if so, whether due to high growth in medical tourists in India, Government are aggressively promoting India as a global healthcare destination to offer a holistic approach to health;

(c) whether Government have also started issuing M (medical) visa to the medical patients, and MX visas to the spouse accompanying him;

(d) whether in India medical services and cost is lower than in US and UK; and

(e) whether further steps his Ministry propose to take to improve the facilities and medical care in India?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Ministry of Tourism does not collect separate information for medical tourists visiting India.

(b) and (d) Yes, Sir.

(e) To attract more foreign tourist to the country Ministry of Tourism has already taken the following measures to promote Medical Tourism:

(i) Indian Healthcare Federation, a Non-Govemmental Organisation affiliated to the Confederation of Indian Industry, on advice by Government, has prepared a guide on select Indian hospitals of the country for health tourism purposes. The same has been placed on Ministry's website *www.incredibleindia. org* for wider publicity.

(ii) Brochure, CDs and other publicity material to promote Medical and health tourism has been produced by the Ministry of Tourism and has been widely circulated for publicity in target market.

(iii) Medical and health tourism has been specifically promoted at various international platforms such as World Travel Mart, London, ITB, Berlin.

(iv) A new category of 'Medical Visa' has been introduced, which can be given for specific purpose to foreign tourism coming to India for medical treatment.

(v) Guidelines for accreditation of Ayurvedic and Panchkarma Centres have been circulated to all State Governments for implementation. The same has been placed on Min'stry of Tourism's website *www.incredibleindia. org* for wider publicity.

(vi) Yoga/Ayurveda/Wellness has been promoted over the last two years in the print, electronic, internet and outdoor medium under the Ministry of Tourism's "Incredible India Campaign".

(vii) Brochures & CDs on Body, Mind and Soul covering the traditional system of medicine have been produced and circulated extensively by Ministry of Tourism.

Medical and Health Tourism Destination

690. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to promote india as a Medical and Health Tourism Destination;

(b) the number of foreign tourists travelled to our country for medical treatment for the past three years;

(c) the total foreign exchange earned by Government through Medical Tourism in the last three years; and

(d) the proposals with Government to improve medical facilities in our country to attract more foreign tourists?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Ministry of Tourism is promoting India as a Global Health Care Destination.

(b) and (c) Ministry of Tourism does not collect separate information for medical tourists visiting India.

(d) To attract more foreign tourist to the country Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministry of Health has already taken the foltowing measures to promote Medical Tourism:

(i) Indian Healthcare Federation, a Non-Govemmental Organisation affiliated to the Confederation of Indian Industry, on advice by Government, has prepared a guide on select Indian hospitals of the country for health tourism purposes. It has been placed on Ministry's website *www.incredibleindia. org* for wider publicity.